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ELECTORAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

A Companion Toolkit for Assessment Teams

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This document contains excerpts from:
USAID Electoral Assessment Framework: A Tool to Assess Needs, Define Objectives, and Identify Program Options

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Submitted To:
USAID

Authored By:
Assia Ivantcheva (USAID)
Michael McNulty (USAID)
Carol Sahley (USAID)
Ellen Seats

Contractor:
The Cloudburst Group
8400 Corporate Drive, Suite 550
Landover, MD 20785
Tel: 301-918-4400
Email: info@cloudburstgroup.com

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Shah Marai, AFP
An Afghan election worker counts ballot papers at a counting center in Afghanistan (2004).

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

This document contains a compilation of tools and illustrative assessment questions from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s *Electoral Assessment Framework: A Tool to Assess Needs, Define Objectives, and Identify Program Options*. USAID's Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG Center) developed the Electoral Assessment Framework to assist USAID DRG officers and other relevant United States Government (USG) personnel to assess and prioritize needs, challenges, and opportunities, and then to develop a strategy and identify appropriate programming options for supporting credible elections. The Executive Summary from the Electoral Assessment Framework has been included below to provide a brief overview of the framework itself.

This document is not intended to summarize the entire Electoral Assessment Framework. Rather, the compilation of tools and assessment questions in this document is intended to provide a complementary, quick reference document for assessment teams and USAID Mission staff using the Electoral Assessment Framework.

INTRODUCTION (EXCERPT FROM ELECTORAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK)

Elections are complex processes. They involve multiple stakeholders performing different functions over a substantial period of time, culminating in voters coming together to select their representatives on election day. USAID's electoral assistance has evolved from discrete programming in political party development and election observation in the mid-1980s to a full portfolio of integrated programming. As elections cut across governance, rule of law, civil society, media, and human rights, a well-designed electoral assistance project presents unique opportunities to promote democratic development. USAID's DRG Center developed the *Electoral Assessment Framework: A Tool to Assess Needs, Define Objectives, and Identify Program Options* to help field officers plan impactful strategies, formulate policy solutions, and design programs that strengthen a country's capacity to conduct genuinely democratic elections.

The Electoral Assessment Framework is intended to assist USAID DRG officers and other relevant USG personnel first and foremost in assessing and prioritizing the challenges in the sector, and then developing a strategy to identify the best program options to promote credible elections. The guide helps prioritize investment of US taxpayer dollars and align assistance strategies with diplomatic strategies. Integral to this guide is USAID's philosophy that technical assistance should continually build a country's capacity to address its own development challenges, advancing it along its journey to self-reliance.

Using this framework involves four steps: (1) assessing the country context; (2) assessing the electoral context; (3) defining objectives and developing an elections and political processes assistance strategy; and (4) identifying priority programs. At the end of each sub-section in the country context and electoral context assessments, the framework provides a checklist of key questions that can be used to guide the assessment of that particular topic. The four steps include the following:

Step 1: Assess the Country Context: Assessing the country context is the first step in understanding and identifying the key political, foundational, and conflict-related factors that can impact opportunities and create risks to credible elections. This step draws on USAID's *DRG Strategic Assessment Framework*[1] and introduces elements of political economy analysis[2] as it examines power dynamics, as well as key actors' political will to support or undermine credible elections and democratic processes and their ability to influence change.

- **Regime type and political system:** Assessing a country's regime type and political system, including factors such as consensus, rule of law, government responsiveness and accountability, inclusion, and competition, provides insight into the country's overall commitment (or lack thereof) to holding genuine elections, as well as

[1] USAID, DRG Strategic Assessment Framework (2014): https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Master_SAF_FINAL%20Fully%20Edited%209-28-15.pdf

[2] See USAID, Applied Political Economy Analysis (PEA) Field Guide (2016): https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2496/Applied%20PEA%20Field%20Guide%20and%20Framework%20Working%20Document%20041516.pdf

into the status of the core democratic principles and freedoms that provide a foundation for credible elections. This also involves examining power dynamics, identifying key actors, and assessing their commitment or opposition to democratic reforms, as well as their capacity to implement or influence changes.

- **Foundational factors:** This includes factors that are slow to change or fix, such as economic, cultural, demographic, historical, and social considerations. Assessing foundational factors provides insight into how a country's power structures, social and historical alignments, cleavages, and alliances influence political culture and norms. This in turn can illuminate areas of opportunity and risk for promoting credible and inclusive elections.
- **Regional political dynamics and foreign actors:** The assessment also considers regional political trends, the history of relations between neighboring countries, and key regional developments, such as natural disasters, famines, regional conflicts, or pandemics, that may affect the elections. It also assesses the motivations and actions of malign foreign actors, who have become increasingly involved in influencing elections and political transitions through disinformation campaigns, cyber attacks, fake election observers, and support for illiberal political actors, among other tactics.
- **Conflict and security environment:** It is essential to analyze conflict dynamics and how they are likely to impact the electoral process. While this is particularly important in countries with active or recently-concluded armed conflict, these factors should be assessed in all contexts. For example, national or transnational organized crime, dominant business interests, chauvinistic gender norms, or corrupt elites may trigger election violence and impact the integrity of the electoral process.

Step 2: Assess the Electoral Context: After assessing the country context, the second step is to focus on the strengths, challenges, opportunities, and constraints in each electoral component. The assessment framework provides guidance on assessing the following nine components of the electoral environment:

1. Legal framework and electoral reform;
2. Election management;
3. Political parties and candidates;
4. Voter education and information;
5. Election observation;
6. Media ecosystem;
7. Electoral security and conflict;
8. Electoral justice; and
9. Post-election and political transitions.

After assessing the country context and electoral environment, DRG officers should have a broad understanding of the most significant gaps, capacity needs, and degree of political will for holding credible elections among key stakeholders, as well as domestic and regional factors that may impact the electoral process. More specifically, DRG officers should have identified the key challenges to electoral integrity, the institutions and actors who can be drivers of change, as well as the opponents or "spoilers." This will inform the next steps—developing a strategy and considering programming options.

The framework also incorporates three overarching ***analytical approaches*** to inform the assessment. These three approaches should be drawn upon and applied throughout Step 1 (country context) and Step 2 (electoral context):

1. **Electoral cycle:** The electoral cycle approach depicts elections as a continuous, integrated process made up of building blocks that interact with and influence each other, rather than as a series of isolated events. This approach considers the needs, opportunities, and risks that will emerge or change at different times in the electoral cycle and electoral calendar.
2. **Democratic principles and obligations:** This approach considers the extent to which international and regional principles and obligations for democratic elections are adhered to in the host country, as well as the level of commitment and capacity that electoral stakeholders demonstrate to upholding and promoting these principles.

3. **Rules of the game and power dynamics:** This approach, which incorporates political economy analysis, takes into account the incentives, interests, and alliances among the key political and economic stakeholders in either promoting or undermining credible elections and broader political processes and democratic reforms. This approach ultimately helps identify factors that could threaten or enhance electoral integrity.

Steps 3 and 4 cover strategy development and programming considerations. Complementing the detailed guides previously published and supported by USAID on topics including election administration; political party development; electoral security; election observation and results verification; political participation and inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities; and electoral justice,[3] Steps 3 and 4 move the analysis from the problems and opportunities identified in the assessment to the development of an elections and political processes (EPP) assistance strategy and prioritization of program options.

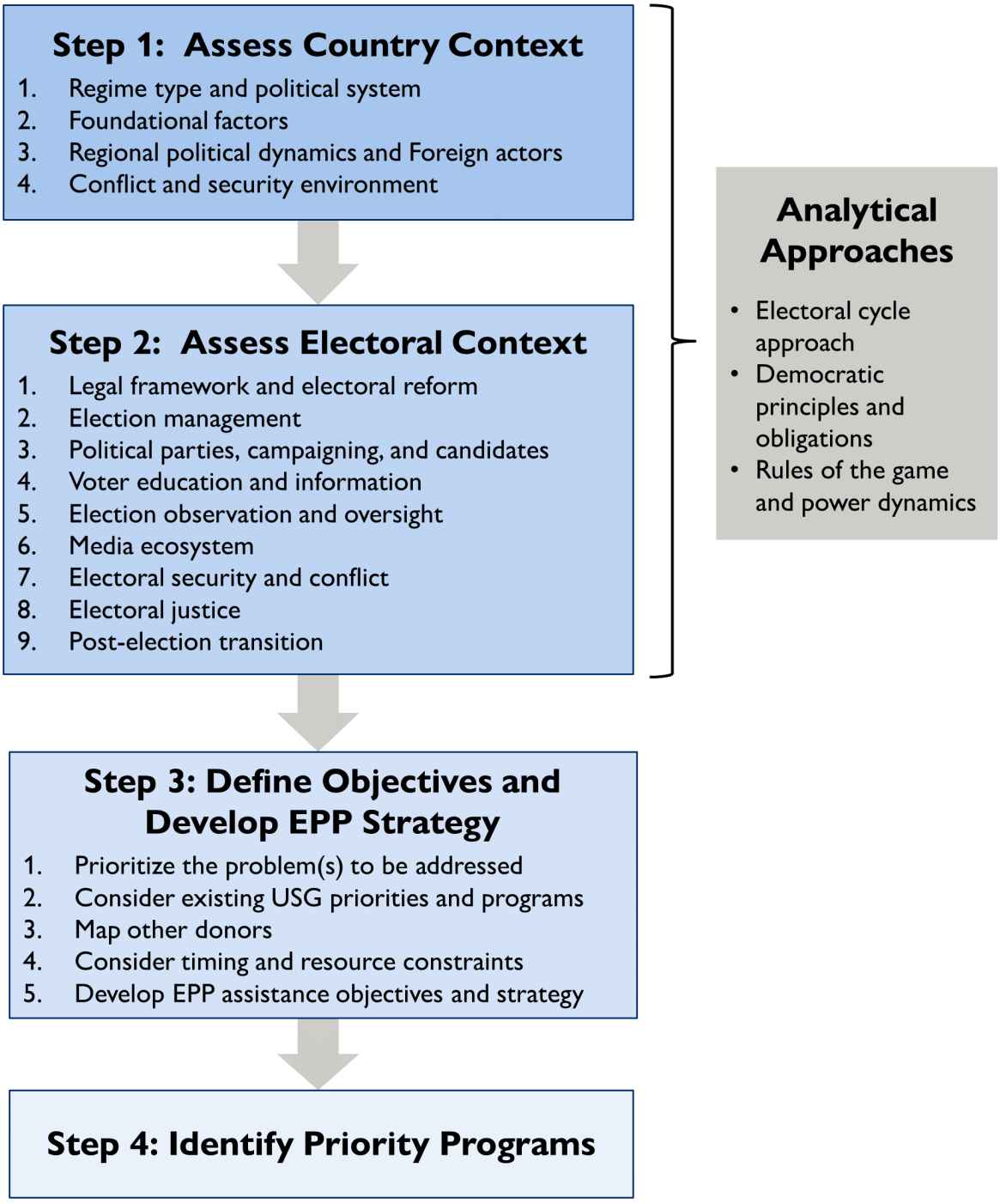
Step 3: Define Objectives and Develop an Elections and Political Processes Strategy: The third step involves defining and prioritizing the EPP challenges and opportunities based on the assessment findings, developing one or more strategic objectives and a theory of change, and taking into account broader USG priorities and the existing or planned USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). It also addresses a number of considerations, including scenario planning; operational considerations, such as timing, budget and staffing constraints; and donor mapping.

Step 4: Identify Priority Programs: This step briefly describes programming options based on the objectives and priorities identified in the previous steps. This section provides an introduction to the most common types of USAID's elections and political processes programming based on different needs and objectives. The section is divided into nine components that are aligned with the nine components in Step 2: Assess the Electoral Context, so that challenges identified in the assessment can be more easily and directly linked to programming options in each subsector.

Using the Electoral Assessment Framework should result in recommendations for an elections and political processes sectoral strategy and programming options that most effectively address a specific country's major electoral integrity challenges.

[3] See USAID's EPP technical publications here: https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/democracy-human-rights-and-governance/technical-publications

Overview of Electoral Assessment Framework



STEP 1: ASSESS THE COUNTRY CONTEXT

These following questions are intended to be illustrative. Assessment teams may choose to omit some of them, add other questions, or adapt the existing questions to better match the context.

1.1 Regime Type and Political System: Illustrative Assessment Questions[4]

- What is the country's regime type? For how long has it been this type of regime?
- To what extent are core democratic rights and freedoms protected and respected, including freedoms of assembly, association, and expression?
- How strong are the checks and balances (in law and practice) between different levels and branches of government?
- To what extent is there genuine and meaningful competition among parties, leaders, and/or candidates with a genuine opportunity for transfer of power? Is the political arena accessible to all political parties and actors?
- How transparent and accessible is information on the decisions and performance of public officials?
- To what extent is pluralism allowed or encouraged in civil society and the media? To what extent is media free to provide information, analysis, and a forum for the competition of ideas?
- To what extent is rule of law respected? Does the government hold itself accountable for adhering to the rule of law? Do citizens have access to effective legal redress when their rights are violated? Is the law enforced fairly and equally by the executive and is independently adjudicated by the courts?
- Are there meaningful mechanisms for all citizens to provide constructive feedback on government performance?
- Are parts of the population excluded, formally or informally, from meaningful political, social, or economic participation? Are parts of the population discriminated against based on race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, language, ethnicity, caste, tribe, socioeconomic status, or geography?
- Is there consensus among political actors that peaceful and democratic elections are the primary means by which political power will be contested?
- To what extent have there been peaceful alternations of power as a result of elections?
- What is the recent trajectory regarding political space and political competition? Is there backsliding or progress overall, and in what specific areas?
- Which groups and actors are the most influential stakeholders in political processes?
- What are the main motivations, power dynamics, and tactics of these stakeholders in participating in the political process?

1.2 Foundational Factors: Illustrative Assessment Questions

Historical, Cultural, and Demographic Factors

- What are the key historical factors (colonial, conflict-related, and others) that affect elections and political processes? What challenges and opportunities do these have on the potential for credible elections?
- What are the most important cultural, social, gender, and religious norms that impact politics and elections in the country, and what effect do those have? How do these norms affect participation of women and marginalized populations?
- What impact do the country's main demographic features (ethnic, linguistic, religious, age groups, etc.) have on politics and the electoral process?

[4] For a more extensive set of questions, refer to USAID DRG Strategic Assessment Framework (2014): https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Master_SAF_FINAL%20Fully%20Edited%209-28-15.pdf

- Which populations/groups are formally and/or informally excluded and disenfranchised from meaningful political participation and influence? What are the key challenges those groups face with exclusion and marginalization?
- How does the country's education level (and differing levels among sub-populations) affect political and electoral processes?
- Is there a significant diaspora population? If so, how are they involved in (or excluded from) the political and electoral environment, and what is the impact?
- Are there any ongoing or recent crises (such as natural disaster, violent conflict or pandemic) that might affect the elections? If so, what impact will that have and on which groups/populations?

Economic Factors

- How have the structure of the economy and sources of state revenue shaped links and accountability relations between the state and different groups in society? To what effect?
- How does the distribution of wealth in the country impact political and electoral processes, including the motivations and tactics of parties/candidates?
- Are there identifiable economic interests and financial groups that heavily influence the political dynamics and political parties?
- To what extent is the country able to pay for its own elections? If significant international support is provided, which donors are providing that support?

1.3 Regional Political Dynamics and Foreign Actors: Illustrative Assessment Questions

- What effect does the country's relationship with its neighbors have on politics and elections?
- Are there current regional issues or crises that will have a significant impact on the credibility of the electoral and political process?
- Is the country particularly vulnerable to external intervention? Is the country dependent on external sources of aid or illegal sources of income?
- Who are the main foreign actors and countries with strong interest in the political and electoral process? Are there motivations to undermine or support democratic elections? What tactics do they use to achieve their goals, and how influential are they?
- Is there significant inflow or outflow of migrants and/or refugees that has an impact on the political environment and electoral process?

1.4 Conflict and Security Environment: Illustrative Assessment Questions

- Has the country experienced prior widespread armed conflict? If so, what was it about and how did it end?
- What have been the main fault lines and root causes of violent political conflict? How have these been transformed or remained entrenched over time?
- Has a history of conflict shaped the norms of political behavior?
- Are elections likely further exacerbate tensions and/or trigger additional violence?
- Is the government effectively in control of all areas of the country? Are there areas of the country in which elections cannot be held (or may not be held) due to security concerns? How large or politically significant are these areas?
- Do criminal organizations employ violence to achieve political objectives?
- Are ideology-based insurgencies active in the country?
- Are security forces widely trusted as impartial actors, or are they politicized?

STEP 2: ASSESS THE ELECTORAL CONTEXT

These following questions are intended to be illustrative. Assessment teams may choose to omit some of them, add other questions, or adapt the existing questions to better match the context.

2.1 Legal Framework and Electoral Reform: Illustrative Assessment Questions

Legal Framework

- Is the legal framework consistent with democratic election principles and obligations?
- Are there major gaps or inconsistencies in the framework? If so, what impact could those have on the prospects for credible elections?
- Does the legal framework facilitate participation without discrimination?
- Does the legal framework provide guarantees for equality between men and women, including temporary special measures if necessary?
- Are electoral districts determined in a way that ensures equal suffrage (one person, one vote) regarding the ratio of citizens to legislative representatives?
- What is the impact of the electoral system on inclusion, participation, representation, accountability, and conflict mitigation/social cohesion?

Electoral Reform Process (if relevant)

- If changes are needed to the electoral system and the legal framework, is there sufficient time for an inclusive, transparent reform process to be completed well ahead of election day?
- What is the likely impact of any proposed electoral reforms on the power balance/competition, consensus, accountability, representation, and inclusion?
- If election laws were reformed recently, to what extent was the reform process transparent? To what extent was the process genuinely inclusive of key electoral stakeholders, including parties across the spectrum, civil society, and voters?
- How have parties, civil society organizations, and the public responded to the electoral law changes? Is there a high level of controversy or broad-based support? To what extent are citizens aware of the changes?

2.2 Election Management: Illustrative Assessment Questions

Election Management Body (EMB) Independence and Impartiality

- Is the election management body independent by law and is it legally required to act in an impartial manner?
- Was the election management body appointed in a transparent and inclusive manner that earned the confidence of parties and the public?
- How and when is the EMB funded, and what impact does this have on its ability to be independent and free from partisan pressures? Does the EMB have a separate operating budget and electoral budget?
- Do parties and other actors have concerns about the election commission's independence?
- Are women and other traditionally marginalized groups equitably represented as election officials, including at leadership levels? If not, what barriers do they face?
- Do mid-level (regional) and local commissions execute their responsibilities impartially?
- How far is the EMB on its journey to self reliance, and how can donors assist that process?

Overall EMB Capacity

- What do most electoral stakeholders consider to be the capacity strengths of the EMB?

- Does the EMB have a long-term, strategic vision or a strategic plan, publicly discussed with all stakeholders?
- What are the most significant concerns that most electoral stakeholders (particularly parties and observers) have about the EMB's technical capacity and level of preparation?
- Does the EMB have adequate resources to fulfill its mission? Are those resources being provided in a timely fashion?
- Has the election commission undertaken preparations for the election in a timely manner? If not, why not?
- Does the EMB have a sufficient strategy and capacity to address and/or counter disinformation during the elections?

Addressing Vulnerabilities to Fraud and Malpractice

- Does the EMB demonstrate a clear commitment to assessing and preventing electoral fraud and manipulation?
- What is the EMB's capacity to identify, anticipate, and mitigate potential threats to electoral integrity by domestic and foreign actors?
- Is there a governmental or official independent body(ies) responsible for election administration oversight? If so, to what extent does it help protect against fraud, waste, abuse, and misconduct by the EMB?

Election Administration

- Is the procurement of election materials and equipment, including any electronic technologies, conducted in a transparent, competitive, and impartial manner?
- How effectively does the EMB coordinate with other bodies that play a role in the elections, such as security bodies?
- To what extent are measures in place to ensure the security of sensitive materials, including ballots and any technology used for voting, counting, results transmission, and tabulation?
- To what extent are measures in place to ensure the secrecy of the vote?
- To what extent do women, youth, minorities, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized populations, face undue or discriminatory obstacles to casting their vote? What are the most significant barriers and for which groups?
- Do citizens, including women, marginalized groups and opposition supporters, expect that they will be able to cast their ballot free from intimidation?

EMB External Outreach

- To what extent have electoral authorities conducted outreach activities to raise the public's awareness of its work?
- Are there regular and consistent mechanisms for the EMB to hold two-way, open dialogue with parties and other key electoral stakeholders?

Voter Registration/Voter List

- Has there been a recent audit or analysis of the voters list? If so, is the voters list up to date, complete, and accurate?
- Is there confidence among parties and the public in the voter registration process and in the integrity of the voter list?
- Are eligible voters, including women, youth, minorities, and persons with disabilities, able to register without undue burden, or barriers? Are there special procedures in place to allow IDPs to register, if needed?
- Are voters able to check the accuracy of the list? To what extent do they take advantage of this opportunity?
- Has voter registration been conducted according to schedule? Is there sufficient time before elections for the EMB to make revisions to the list following voters' and parties' review of the preliminary list?

Open Election Data

- To what extent does the EMB make information and data relating to all stages of the electoral cycle available and accessible to electoral stakeholders in an open and timely manner?
- Does the EMB make election results publicly available in a timely, complete manner at the level at which ballots are counted?

Technologies in Election Administration

- Has there been consideration of or recent adoption of new technologies in the elections?
- If so, to what extent were key electoral stakeholders meaningfully consulted in the decision-making process?
- Was/is the decision-making process based on a needs assessment that identifies the specific electoral process problems and whether technology could help address those problems?
- And was/is the decision based on a consideration of: advantages and disadvantages; costs versus benefits; technical feasibility; EMB capacity; sufficient time to test and deploy the technology prior to the elections; and legality of using electronic technologies in elections?
- What impact has the use of technology had on the previous electoral cycles, peace and security (if relevant), and the democratic direction of the host country?
- If new technologies are being introduced, what are the EMB's capacities, needs, and gaps to effectively implement the new technologies?
- What is the source of funding for the acquisition and maintenance of the technology?
- What is the EMB's capacity to ensure that any election technologies used are secure? What are the greatest cybersecurity vulnerabilities and risks?

2.3 Political Parties and Candidates: Illustrative Assessment Questions

Political Party System and Space

- What type of political party system does the country have? Is it a dominant party state, two-party system, coherent multi-party system, or fragmented multi-party system?
- Are there sufficient options and diversity among electoral contestants/parties to offer voters a meaningful electoral choice? Does the party system represent the major groups in the country? Are there any major groups that are excluded?
- How does the constitutional and legal framework (including presidential vs. parliamentary, electoral system, degree of centralization, political party laws) affect the incentives of political parties?
- Revisit question from Country Context: What is/are the primary means of political support for the main political actors/parties? Ideology/policy-based? Ethnic, religious or other social cleavage? Economic? Personality-based?
- In general, what motivates political leaders to be involved in politics?
- What other factors influence party behavior, such as informal and formal rules, gender norms, restrictions by an authoritarian regime, and/or the security environment?
- What is the role of women in parties? What is the role of youth in parties?

Party Organization and Internal Democracy

- How are different parties structured internally?
- To what extent are members informed of and able to participate in party decisions?
- What is the gender composition of the party's leadership, staff, and candidates?
- What differences exist in terms of opportunities and barriers among women of varying ages, ethnic or religious groups, or urban/rural backgrounds? How does this differ for poor, disabled, indigenous or LGBTI individuals?

- To what extent do parties take proactive measures to ensure equal opportunity for women, youth, and marginalized groups as candidates, leaders, staff, and activists? What incentives (formal or informal) exist for parties to achieve this equal opportunity?
- Are parties' candidate selection processes clear, inclusive, and transparent (depending on the electoral system)? And do candidate selection processes reflect a consensus among key actors within the parties?
- Do parties have measures to promote selection of candidates that represent a cross-section of constituencies within the party, such as women, geographic regions, linguistic or ethnic communities, and/or representatives of various internal factions?
- If they exist, what role do women's and youth wings play within the parties?
- To what extent do parties have the political will and systems in place to develop the next generation of party leaders? Or is this development purposefully stifled?
- What role within the party do its elected legislators (parliamentarians, local councilors) play? To what extent do elected members seek to advance party policy priorities once in office?

Citizen Responsiveness and Party Functions, including Policy Development, Campaigning, and Outreach

- To what extent do parties have the capacity and resources to develop platforms, legislation, and issue-based policies? And to what extent do parties have the political will to conduct these tasks?
- To what extent do parties propose policies that are responsive to citizens and representative of the diversity of their members' interests?
- To what extent do parties have the structures and systems in place to campaign effectively and conduct voter outreach? Do they engage in issue-based citizen engagement activities?
- Which parties have the capacity, resources, and political will to establish and manage local branches?
- What are the most common ways that parties conduct their campaigns, and how do they communicate their messages to the electorate?
- How well does the party leverage new technologies, including social media, in party building and its outreach?
- How common is vote buying, and which parties (e.g., government and/or opposition) use vote buying more extensively?
- To what extent do parties conduct meaningful, targeted outreach to women, youth, and marginalized groups?
- To what extent do parties conduct and/or use public opinion research to more strategically tailor and target voter outreach?
- How extensively do parties and/or their proxies (such as public relations firms or consultants) engage in disinformation campaigns?
- For parties with seats in the legislature, are there any significant capacity and/or political will gaps regarding coalition building, opposition-government relations, and/or caucus management?
- To what extent do parties have the commitment, capacity, and resources to train and deploy pollwatchers across the country and to collect and analyze pollwatchers' reports and complaints in a complete and timely manner?

Party Behavior and Democratic Conduct

- Do parties have mechanisms for their members to hold their leaders accountable? If so, are these used in practice?
- To what extent are any candidates or parties advocating violence, directly or indirectly? Are parties perpetrating violence through proxies, such as youth groups, organized crime, gangs, or violent extremists?
- To what extent are parties taking proactive measures to ensure that their activists and supporters do not instigate violent acts?
- Are there any mechanisms for resolving inter-party disputes?

Party Transparency, Political Finance, and Abuse of State Resources

- What are the main sources of finance for parties and candidates—public funding, private funding, or both? What are the main sources of private funding? How do the sources and scale of party finance impact the integrity of the electoral process?
- What are the main challenges to ensuring that the political finance environment promotes sustainable parties and provides the opportunity to compete on a level playing field? Are the challenges related more to weak or nonexistent laws/regulations, lack of enforcement, or politically-biased enforcement?
- Do parties' political finance practices exacerbate barriers to women and traditionally marginalized groups, such as formal or informal requirements that candidates finance their own campaigns and fundraise for the party's campaign?
- Is there evidence or a perception that state resources are being abused in the campaign in a manner that favors one party or candidate? What are the most common forms of abuse of state resources?
- What aspects of the legal framework and enabling environment need improvement to reduce the risk of abuse of state resources?

2.4 Voter Education: Illustrative Assessment Questions

- What are the main challenges regarding voter participation and knowledge: low turnout, uninformed voters, or large numbers of "errors" (spoiled ballots, going to the wrong polling station, etc.)? What are the main reasons behind these challenges?
- To what extent are eligible voters informed about how to register to vote, how to confirm their registration, and how to make corrections to their registration if needed?
- To what extent are voters informed about when, where, and how to vote, as well as about the ballot options to make an informed choice?
- To what extent can the EMB be trusted to provide voter education in an impartial and inclusive manner?
- Do voters have credible, sufficient and easily accessible information about candidates' and parties' platforms and performance records (i.e., are they able to make an informed choice)?
- Are voters aware of their rights and how to file a complaint/seek remedies if needed?
- Are there significant differences among different demographics in voter turnout rates? What are the likely reasons for this?
- Is voter education conducted in a strategic manner that takes into account how different types of people (gender, ethnicity, language, geography, etc.) usually access and consume information?
- To what extent are women and marginalized populations, as well groups with special voting procedures, such as the military, prisoners, the infirm, and out of country voters, provided targeted voter information?
- Are there plans and resources for voter education to be conducted well enough in advance of election day to ensure voters are well-informed?
- Can civil society and media conduct their own voter education without undue restrictions?

2.5 Election Observation: Illustrative Assessment Questions

Election Observation Strategy

- Considering the entire electoral cycle, which issues, problems (e.g., barriers to participation, types of fraud, types of electoral violence), and processes could have the most impact on the credibility of the electoral process? Which aspects will be less important to monitor?
- At what points in the electoral cycle do these issues, problems, and processes occur and, thus, need to be monitored?

- Is there a high-priority need to independently assess or verify the election results, including the accuracy of the tabulation process?
- What role could election observation play in mitigating electoral violence, including violence against women in elections? How likely is observation to help deter fraud and encourage voter turnout?
- Is there a clear strategic role that international observation could play in promoting credible elections? If so, what aspects of the process would benefit most from international observation? Given the context, would a regional or international organization have more influence in promoting credible elections through an observation mission, or would both be highly valuable?

Observer Access

- Are accredited nonpartisan citizen election observers, party pollwatchers, and international observers permitted to observe all aspects of the electoral process, and do they have access to relevant information and data?
- Does the EMB provide accreditation to citizen observers, party pollwatchers, and international observers without discrimination or unnecessary restrictions?
- Are observers able to conduct their work without undue interference or impediments? Are there any areas of the country that cannot be observed, for example, due to security issues?
- Do election observers have the unimpeded right to release public findings (including results verification), or are there restrictions?
- Are there any restrictions against parallel vote tabulations (PVTs) and/or likely government efforts to thwart PVT projections? Can observers fully monitor voting and counting processes?
- What risks do election monitors face in restricted or conflict environments, and are there risk mitigation plans in place?

Election Observer Credibility and Capacity

- How are international observers perceived in the country? How are nonpartisan citizen observers perceived?
- Which observer groups are considered the most credible, objective, and professional?
- Which groups are not credible (government-organized nongovernmental organizations (GONGOs), zombie observers, etc.)?
- Are there citizen observer groups and/or coalitions that have (or with technical assistance could build) the capacity to effectively monitor the most important aspects of the elections? Which groups? What gaps and needs do they still have, if any? If a PVT is considered, is there a reliable local partner who can conduct it (with some technical assistance)?
- What is the level of public awareness of citizen election observers? Does their presence or absence seem to affect public confidence in elections?
- To what extent do citizen observers and party pollwatchers involve women and marginalized populations as observers, staff, and leaders?
- To what extent do citizen observer groups focus on monitoring and exposing barriers to the participation of women and marginalized populations?
- Do the government and electoral authorities discuss and meaningfully consider the findings of party agents, citizen observers, and/or international observers?

2.6 Media Ecosystem: Illustrative Assessment Questions

- What are the most common ways (including but not limited to different traditional and social media sources) that different types of voters receive information about politics and elections?
- What are internet connectivity rates, mobile telephone usage, and social media site usage among different segments of the population (including by gender)?

Traditional Media

- What are the most trusted media sources in this country context? Does the public generally trust the media as a credible source of information on elections and politics? Or are certain types of media (print, TV, radio, online) trusted more than others?
- How pluralistic is the media environment? Are diverse views presented, and if not which views are under-represented?
- Who owns or controls the main media outlets (TV, print, radio), and what are the political implications of this ownership?
- Is state-owned, state-controlled, and/or public media coverage politically balanced and impartial, or is it state-influenced and/or biased toward the government and ruling party/coalition?
- To what extent is the media free of censorship and undue influence from the government in covering parties, the government, and election-related topics?
- Do election participants have unimpeded access to domestic (public and private) and international media?
- Does the media have access to all elements of the electoral process?
- What is the media's level of capacity to responsibly and accurately report on the electoral process?
- To what extent are there differences in coverage between men and women political leaders and candidates? What impact does this have on the ability of women to participate and compete on an equal basis as men?

Social Media and Disinformation

- What is the level of media literacy of the population?
- How resilient are different segments of the population to disinformation and propaganda efforts, and which segments are most vulnerable?
- To what extent and how do different segments of voters use social media platforms and messaging apps to engage in politics and elections?
- What roles do social media and messaging apps play in enhancing and undermining the electoral process?
- To what extent, and in what ways, is disinformation a threat to electoral integrity?
- Who are the main perpetrators of using social media and messaging for malign purposes (disinformation, hate speech, offensive/personal attacks, etc.), and what are their respective motivations? Who are the main victims? What impact does this have on the inclusiveness and fairness of the process?
- What types of online violence against women in politics are most common and/or were most common during previous elections?

2.7 Electoral Security and Conflict: Illustrative Assessment Questions

Electoral Violence Types/Tactics, Triggers, Perpetrators, and Victims

- What are the main types, tactics, and extent of electoral violence in past elections?
- What are the most likely triggers of electoral violence during the pre-election, election day and post-election periods? What are some key early warning sign indicators of these triggers that should be closely monitored?
- Is there a high degree of uncertainty about the outcome of the elections? Or is there a perception that the elections will be illegitimate or unfair?
- Which geographic areas (hot spots) are more susceptible to violence?
- Who have been the main perpetrators of electoral violence in terms of organizational/party affiliation and demographics?
- Who have been the main victims of and most affected by electoral violence in terms of organizational/party affiliation and demographics (gender, ethnicity, religion, etc.)?
- Are any malign foreign actors seeking to foment violence? If so, for what purpose and through what means?

Violence against Women and Marginalized Groups

- What types of electoral violence (physical, psychological, threats and coercion, sexual) have most affected the participation of women as voters, activists, candidates, and officials?
- In what ways do gender norms and political dynamics in the country put women at increased risk for violence?
- To what extent are women candidates and officials the targets of threats, intimidation, or shaming tactics on social media?
- What types of electoral violence affect the participation of each marginalized group, including LGBTI individuals and religious and ethnic minorities?
- To what extent are measures put in place to monitor, mitigate and punish violence against each type of marginalized group? If measures are insufficient, what are the main reasons for this?

Government Capacity and Commitment

- What is the capacity of the government and EMB to prepare for, prevent and control potential election-related violence? Have they received training in electoral security administration?
- What is the level of commitment of the government and EMB to prepare for, prevent and control potential election-related violence?
- To what extent are the security forces that are involved in electoral security (particularly surrounding election day) trusted as impartial and effective by the main electoral stakeholders?

Other Questions

- To what extent do social media and messaging apps play a role in spreading hate speech and other content that could trigger electoral violence?
- To what extent is the international community involved in promoting secure, peaceful elections? Who are the key international peace actors?
- In contexts that are significantly-affected by conflict and/or emerging from conflict, what would be an appropriate time frame for holding elections?

2.8 Electoral Justice: Illustrative Assessment Questions

Legal Framework and Electoral Dispute Resolution (EDR) Mechanisms

- What types of EDR mechanisms exist? On paper, do these provide an opportunity for effective remedy? In practice, have they in past elections?
- Does the electoral calendar include adequate time to implement EDR processes?
- What points in the electoral cycle are likely to see the most (in terms of quantity) complaints and/or disputes filed? What points in the electoral cycle could be the most legally controversial?
- Are the elections expected to be close, contested, and/or controversial?
- Are there clear procedures for filing and processing challenges to election results, recounts, and re-run elections?

Impartiality

- Are adjudicative authorities impartial and free from partisan influence?
- Do stakeholders trust that the electoral justice system is fair and impartial?
- How and by whom are EDR authorities appointed? How does this affect whether electoral justice can be administered—and perceived to be administered—impartially?

Competence/Capacity

- Is it likely that the adjudicative authorities are capable of providing effective remedy even in highly controversial,

grave situations?

- Do stakeholders have confidence in the capacity of the EDR body's capacity?
- Are grievances typically resolved in a timely manner?
- Do EDR bodies have sufficient expertise and resources to manage their caseload and meet legally-mandated timelines for resolving complaints and disputes?

Stakeholder Awareness and Transparency

- Are stakeholders aware of EDR mechanisms? Do they use EDR mechanisms?
- Are the EDR processes transparent? Are meetings and/or hearings open to the public, media and observers? Is EDR-related data provided in an open manner?
- Are procedures for recounts and re-elections open and accessible to election stakeholders?
- Are alternative dispute resolution mechanisms available to stakeholders?

Equality before the Law and Nondiscrimination

- Do women and marginalized populations face institutional and/or procedural obstacles in accessing electoral justice?
- Is there a pattern of unequal treatment by EDR bodies concerning certain political parties or populations?

2.9 Post-election Transitions: Illustrative Assessment Questions

- What are the most likely post-election scenarios?
    - What is the likelihood of the elections resulting in a transition of power? Would this increase or decrease the prospects for the country's democratic development?
    - Is the post-election period expected to be highly contentious and potentially violent or destabilizing?
- If transition of power to a more democratic leader/government is possible:
    - What would be the most important capacity-building needs of the new government?
    - What are the highest priority democratic reforms? Who are the key stakeholders that should be involved in shaping and advocating for those reforms, should the opportunity arise?
    - What opportunities would there be to increase gender equality and inclusion of marginalized populations in the country's governance?
- If transition of power to a more authoritarian leader/government is possible:
    - What would be the highest risks for curbing of rights, closing space, and other democratic backsliding?
    - What would be the opportunities and challenges for preventing such backsliding?
    - Which groups of stakeholders would be most important in this effort?
- If a highly contentious, potentially violent post-election environment is anticipated, review Illustrative Questions in the Electoral Security section above.

STEP 3: DEFINE OBJECTIVES AND DEVELOP AN EPP STRATEGY

Step 3 helps USAID DRG officers interpret the information collected during the assessment and apply it to developing an EPP strategic objective and a theory of change. This provides an essential link between the assessment and the consideration of potential program options. The following text provides a brief summary of the key components involved in Step 3.

3.1 Define and Prioritize the Key Problems to be Addressed

Identify key risks and vulnerabilities: Review the problems identified in Step 2 and determine whether each is an acute risk to electoral integrity that is so significant it threatens the credibility of the elections if not addressed. This helps to summarize the most significant challenges, vulnerabilities, and political and technical constraints in the electoral process to determine where there are critical gaps and specific threats. As part of this exercise, the assessment should identify the actors that may seek to undermine the electoral process, assess their motivations, and attempt to anticipate the tactics they may use. The worksheet on the following page provides a tool for pulling this information together.

Worksheet for Summarizing Key Risks of Electoral Fraud and Manipulation[5]

Risk Categories (Illustrative)	Likely types of fraud/ manipulation	Main perpetrator(s)	Motivation of perpetrator(s)	Impact on electoral integrity
Manipulation of legal and procedural framework				
Politically-biased electoral management body and/or judiciary				
Manipulation of information (including traditional and social media)				
Voting process fraud (e.g., multiple voting, ballot box stuffing)				
Manipulation of vote count and/or election results				
Exclusion of women and other marginalized groups				
Restrictions on political rights for electoral advantage				
Election-related violence, coercion, and intimidation				
Distortion and/or abuse of political finance				
Abuse of state resources				

[5] For more on categorizing electoral fraud and manipulation risks, see Creative Associates, *Electoral Malpractice Primer: Insights and Priorities* (2012): http://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/archive/questions/replies/531723839/52093951/Creative-Electoral-Integrity-Framework-Project.pdf and International IDEA, *Electoral Risk Management Tool* (2013): https://www.idea.int/data-tools/tools/electoral-risk-management-tool

Identify windows of opportunity: Determine if there are particular windows of opportunity (such as recent political breakthroughs, recent legal reforms, or strong partners who could be drivers of change) that could provide a higher likelihood of success in addressing a particular problem.

Considering timing and the electoral cycle: Consider where the current timing is within the electoral cycle and how this may affect the ability to address specific problems. The timing of various aspects of the electoral cycle helps define the scope of potential USAID interventions that may be appropriate for an upcoming election. Generally, the more time in advance of an election, the more strategic options will be available.

3.2 Consider USG Priorities and Programming

EPP program decisions should take into account and align with USG foreign policy objectives, in accordance with a USG electoral strategy. The assessment should consider the Integrated Country Strategy, as well as the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) or transition strategy, for the country, as well as both past and current USAID and broader USG DRG support, particularly with elections and political processes. This can help further narrow down and refine the key problems to be addressed through USAID's EPP strategy.

3.3 Map and Coordinate with Other Donors

It is important to map donors beyond USG entities to identify which activities are most appropriate for USAID's consideration, given other donors' plans and activities. Coordination is essential to avoid duplication of effort, strategically allocate limited resources, and optimize the impact of assistance by capitalizing on different donors' relative strengths.

3.4 Consider Resources

The assessment should consider existing and potential future financial and personnel resources, the degree of flexibility of USAID's funding for the country, and the constraints and opportunities this may raise for programmatic options. The assessment should recommend if there are certain priorities and programming opportunities that should be increased; any trade-offs if resources for those priorities are not increased; short- and/or long-term USAID personnel needs; and whether USAID support could be leveraged to complement other donors' support.

3.5 Develop Objectives and EPP Strategy

Objectives and theory of change: The assessment should define broader objectives that address the key problems identified above. These objectives should be mid-level, or intermediate, objectives, which are the most ambitious objectives on which USAID expects to have a direct material effect in the EPP sector. These objectives will help inform program objectives and design. The assessment team should then articulate a theory of change, which explains why and how the proposed interventions, when implemented successfully, will lead to achieving the EPP objective(s).

USAID EPP strategy: While in many cases Missions move directly from the assessment to program design, it is a best practice to develop a USAID EPP strategy. An EPP strategy summarizes the objective(s) of the USAID's overall EPP assistance and highlights how all the programs work together to achieve the objectives. The objectives identified in the assessment can form the basis of such a strategy. A strategy should consider the totality of EPP-related programs and how they intersect to support higher level goals.

Interagency election strategies: In high-profile, complex countries, USAID may also participate in an interagency election strategy, which can either be a Washington-based exercise or a field based process. Interagency strategies should ideally consider the full range of USG assets—diplomatic, assistance, economic, and/or information—engaged in achieving the strategic objective. The development of an interagency strategy should be based on consensus around a common USG goal for the election process.

Scenario planning: An EPP strategy should consider the major scenarios that could play out, as well as the potential adaptations that would be needed under each scenario. Missions should also build adaptive management mechanisms and flexibility in their EPP portfolios in case quick changes are necessary. In addition, scenario planning should consider "red lines" for curtailing certain assistance or all assistance, if needed.

STEP 4: IDENTIFY PRIORITY PROGRAMMING

After defining objectives in Step 3, Step 4 involves prioritizing EPP programming areas related to those objectives. The tables included in this section are divided into nine components that are aligned with the nine components in Step 2: Assess the Electoral Context. This ensures that the key challenges identified in the assessment can be more easily and directly linked to programming options in each subsector.

The tables included in this section are not intended to cover all potential objectives and program options. Rather, they outline some of the most commonly-used objectives and highlight examples of activities to address those objectives.

4.1 Legal Framework and Electoral Reform: Illustrative Objectives and Programming Examples

Illustrative Objectives	Programming Examples
Promote a coherent electoral legal framework that adheres to international principles and obligations	• Technical assistance on constitutional and electoral system design. • Provision of comparative examples and legal analysis. • Technical assistance on drafting electoral legislation, amendments, and regulations. • Training in legislative and regulatory drafting. • Awareness raising among civil society, political parties, and other electoral stakeholders of the options for legal reform and their consequences.

Encourage an inclusive, transparent electoral reform process	• Support and technical assistance for:
	  • electoral reform working groups, public forums, inter-party dialogue, public opinion research, and/or other mechanisms for inclusive input and deliberation on reform;
	  • civil society advocacy for electoral reforms; and
	  • civil society analysis and monitoring of electoral reforms and reform processes.
	• Coordinate with and support for diplomatic engagement to encourage electoral and political reforms.

4.2 Election Management: Illustrative Objectives and Programming Examples

Illustrative Objectives	Programming Examples
Enhance EMB independence and impartiality	Technical assistance on: • establishing rules and procedures on composition and selection/appointment of commissioners, officials, and members for different levels of the EMB; • drafting regulations and electoral procedures; and • regulating areas under the EMB's purview, such as political finance (depends on country). Support for strengthening and empowering EMB governmental oversight body(ies), where appropriate.
Strengthen leadership and strategic management	Technical assistance and training on: • strategic and operational planning and management; • applying leadership principles; • scenario planning and crisis management; • assessing electoral conflict and fraud risks to develop mitigation measures; and • internal audits and post-election assessments. Facilitating exchanges with other EMBS for mutual problem-solving and professional development. Support for developing and implementing a gender and social inclusion strategy.

Ensure effective administration and operations	Technical assistance and training on planning, administrative, and logistical aspects of core EMB functions, including: • voter registration and voters list integrity; • candidate registration; • production and distribution of election materials; • recruitment and training of pollworkers; • security of electoral infrastructure; • preparation for and running of election day voting and counting processes; and • tabulating and publishing election results. In specific, limited circumstances, programming may include logistical and administrative support and/or commodities and procurement assistance.
Promote effective external communication and inclusive stakeholder engagement	Technical assistance and support on: • strategic communications; • crisis communication planning and skills; • coordination mechanisms with other state bodies; • dialogue platforms with political parties, media, and civil society; and • countering disinformation.
Enhance transparency and open election data	• Assessment to identify ways to improve provision of open election data • Assistance with establishing more transparent processes, from procurement and commission decision making to results tabulation and dispute resolution. • Technical support for transparency measures, such as digitizing information and providing data to stakeholders in an accessible, timely manner.
Promote sound and inclusive consideration and—if appropriate—implementation of electronic technologies	Technical assistance on: • decision making on considering adoption of new technologies on whether they are appropriate to the context, financially sustainable, and address specific problems; • assessing feasibility and testing potential technologies; • strengthening technological capacity to integrate new technologies, when appropriate; and • bolstering cybersecurity capability and preparedness.

4.3 Political Party Assistance: Illustrative Objectives and Programming Examples

Illustrative Objectives	Programming Examples
Promote a competitive multiparty system	• Promotion of legal enabling environment and regulatory reforms to level the playing field and improve electoral integrity. • Use of alternate strategies and methods of outreach in closed contexts.
Encourage issue-based parties; enhance platform and policy development capacity	Training and guidance on: • platform development; • research on substantive policy issues; • issue-based citizen engagement activities; • candidate debates; and • conducting and applying polling and research to understand citizen priorities.

Increase responsiveness to citizens and diversity of party representation	Technical assistance and training on enhancing campaign capacity, including: • strategic campaign planning; • voter participation, voter identification and contact, and GOTV; • inclusive candidate recruitment, selection, and training; • fundraising techniques; • media relations; and • strategically leveraging new technologies. Training and technical assistance on citizen responsiveness and engagement efforts, including: • expanding membership; • developing and expanding core constituencies; • building grassroots volunteer networks; and • engagement of women, youth, and other traditionally marginalized groups.
Enhance party internal democracy and organizational effectiveness	Technical assistance on: • strengthening internal party management; • improving the recruiting and training of party staff; • establishing branch offices; and • introducing more inclusive and transparent candidate recruitment and selection methods.
Increase women's political leadership within parties and in elected office	• Training for party members and leaders to conduct and use gender audits. • Capacity building for women's wings and affinity groups. • Training emerging women leaders and candidates. • Encouraging and advising on mechanisms, bylaws, and regulations that improve gender equality. • Training for party leaders to enhance their understanding of gender, discrimination, and inequality.
Enhance political parties' oversight of electoral process	Support and technical assistance on: • political party pollwatching (election day); and • political party monitoring of the entire electoral process using evidence-based techniques.
Improve political parties' legislative capacity	• Technical assistance on coalition building, opposition-government relations, and/or caucus management in the legislature.
Increase parties' respect for the rule of law, democratic conduct, and transparency	Technical assistance and training on: • development and enforcement of codes of conduct; • inter-party dialogue to foster consensus on electoral processes and respect for legal framework; and • improving compliance with financial disclosure regulation. Support for civil society monitoring of parties and advocacy toward parties for internal reforms and/or commitment to party integrity.

4.4 Voter Education: Illustrative Objectives and Programming Examples

Illustrative Objectives	Programming Examples
Promote access to accurate and impartial voter information	• Technical assistance and support to EMBs and CSOs on the design, testing, targeting, implementation, and evaluation of voter information campaigns. • Support for production and dissemination of voter information and education materials, media content, and online content. • Guidance and support to EMBs and CSOs on context-appropriate uses of technologies to improve voter information outreach. • Facilitation of private sector engagement for supporting voter information. • Development of electoral education courses.
Ensure voters are equipped to make an informed choice	Support for: • candidate debates; • civil society and media-led voter education focused on key electoral issues and factual information about candidates/parties; • activities to counter disinformation (described in more detail in the Media Ecosystem section below); and • digital literacy training.
Bolster voter participation	Support for: • nonpartisan GOTV campaigns; and • voter education tailored to address the reasons behind why specific populations are not able to and/or not choosing to participate.

4.5 Election Observation: Illustrative Objectives and Programming Examples

Illustrative Objectives	Programming Examples
Promote public confidence in the electoral process. *(Where the government demonstrates a commitment to holding credible elections)*	• Long- and short-term citizen election observation. • International election observation.
Strengthen accountability for holding genuine elections. *(Where the government demonstrates partial commitment but takes some measures to restrict democratic principles)*	• Long- and short-term citizen election observation, with a particular emphasis on long-term observation. • International election observation.
Expose and deter fraud. *(Where the government actively seeks to undermine credible elections.)*	• Long- and short-term citizen election observation, with a particular emphasis on long-term observation.
Promote impartial and systematic oversight of electoral processes.	• Long-term citizen election observation. • Systematic short-term (election day) observation by citizen election observers, such as sample-based observation/PVT.
Demonstrate international support for credible and peaceful elections.	International election observation, which can include: • pre- or post-election assessment missions; • long-term observation; and • election day observation delegations.
Independently verify election results.	• Support and technical assistance for a PVT. • Exit polling. • Election forensics.

Mitigate electoral violence.	• Long-term and short-term citizen election observation focused on triggers and incidents of violence, while integrating consideration of violence against women in elections. • Targeted citizen election observation focused on violence against specific, vulnerable populations such as women and minorities.
Contribute to informing USG's election statements, assessments, and policy decisions.	• Complementing citizen and international election observation with diplomatic observation.
Expose and counter disinformation in elections	• Citizen election monitoring of social and traditional media (see Section 6: Media Ecosystem for more details). • Long-term international election observation that includes thematic focus on the information environment, including disinformation.

4.6 Media Ecosystem: Illustrative Objectives and Programming Examples

Illustrative Objectives	Programming Examples
Improve media ecosystem legal environment	• Support for development of and advocacy for legal reforms that bolster media independence, access to information, internet freedom, media rights, and/or security for journalists.
Build media actors' capacity to cover elections	• Training and technical assistance for journalists and other media professionals on covering elections, investigative reporting, fact-checking, gender-aware reporting, security, and conflict-sensitive reporting. • Technical assistance to media bodies on editorial standards and voter education
Enhance access to objective and accurate electoral information	• Support for the production of political debates, voter education, and other election-related content (see Voter Information and Education section above for more details).
Promote resilience to disinformation / counter disinformation	Support for: • traditional and social media-focused groups and civic-tech efforts to detect, monitor, expose, and combat disinformation; • media literacy efforts; • fact-checking platforms; and • civil society advocacy for social media platform accountability.

4.7 Electoral Security and Conflict Prevention: Illustrative Objectives and Programming Examples

Illustrative Objectives	Programming Examples
Defuse/mitigate interparty tensions and promote inter-party dialogue	Support for: • development and enforcement of political party conflict management mechanisms; • codes of conduct; and • inter-party dialogue mechanisms.
Improve election security planning and implementation	• Technical assistance to EMBs and security bodies in assessing electoral security risks and threats at different points in the electoral process, and designing strategies and plans to mitigate those risks. • Provision of electoral security training, with a human rights emphasis, where appropriate. • Support for the development of coordination bodies comprising government and non-state actors.
Strengthen accountability measures	• Strengthen legal enforcement by relevant state actors and entities. • Support public campaigns to build public support and norms regarding peaceful elections.

Mitigate potential triggers of electoral conflict.	• Promote greater transparency in election administration. • Training in conflict mediation skills for parties, CSOs, and pollworkers. • Support establishment of electoral stakeholder forums at the national and community levels. • Strengthen electoral justice and medication mechanisms. • Support for government institutions (where relevant) and civil society to monitor early warning signs and develop incident response capabilities. • Support for monitoring early warning signs and incidents of violence against women in elections. • Support for grassroots peacebuilding efforts.

4.8 Electoral Justice: Illustrative Objectives and Programming Examples

Illustrative Objectives	Programming Examples
Strengthen EDR legal framework and mechanisms	• Technical assistance on assessing and revising EDR legal framework, such as composition and operation of EDR body, timelines, and ease of procedures. • Where appropriate, support for developing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, such as the use of mediation, arbitration, or ad hoc bodies.
Bolster impartiality, fairness, and transparency of EDR processes	• Support to relevant EDR body(ies) in providing open data and information on EDR processes. • Support for monitoring EDR mechanisms and demand for improving electoral justice through citizen (and, if appropriate, international) election observation, civil society advocacy, and/or media programming. • Diplomatic engagement to encourage adherence to norms and standards on EDR.
Strengthen EDR capacity	• Capacity building for EDR leadership on handling of EDR process, results-related disputes, and other topics. • Technical assistance on setting up and/or improving case management processes and tools. • Capacity building for sub-national EDR bodies (where relevant) focused on legal framework, case management, and other topics.
Promote stakeholder awareness	• Support for awareness-raising efforts to ensure stakeholders—parties, voters, and observers where relevant—know how to use EDR mechanisms, including procedures and deadlines. Place particular emphasis on awareness raising among marginalized groups. • Training for political parties (including pollwatchers) on how to adequately document, file, and defend sound election-related cases with election commissions or the courts.

4.9 Post-election and Political Transitions: Illustrative Objectives and Programming Examples

Illustrative Objectives	Programming Examples
Promote democratic electoral reforms	See Programming Examples in Section 1: Legal Framework and Electoral Reform above
Bolster democratic and peaceful political transitions	• Orientation and training for newly-elected officials and legislators. • Executive transition programming that facilitates a smooth transition between administrations. • Support for immediate strategic and crisis communication capability of the new government. • Support to a potential ongoing peace process.
Promote accountability in political transitions	• Civil society monitoring of and advocating for fulfillment of campaign promises, democratic reforms, and/or ongoing peace processes.

ANNEX: ASSESSMENT REPORT TEMPLATE

The following is a suggested outline for the assessment report that is produced through using the *Electoral Assessment Framework*. The outline may be adapted depending on the particular focus and purpose of the assessment.

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction and Contextual Information
    A. Purpose and Methodology
    B. Contextual Information: Summarize any broader country context information from Step 1 (Country Context) that is crucial to framing the key assessment findings and recommendations.
3. Key Assessment Findings
    A. *Problems and Threats to Electoral Integrity:* Summarize the highest priority problems and threats to electoral integrity identified in Step 1 (Country Context) and Step 2 (Electoral Context). The "Identify Key Risks and Vulnerabilities" section of Step 3.1 helps narrow these down.
    B. *Windows of Opportunity:* Summarize the windows of opportunity identified in Step 1 (Country Context) and Step 2 (Electoral Context). The "Identify Windows of Opportunity and Potential Areas for Positive Reform" section of Step 3.1 helps narrow these down.
    C. *Other Key Considerations:* Summarize relevant findings related to timing, resources, interagency priorities, and donor mapping from Steps 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4.
4. Assessment Recommendations
    A. Potential EPP Objectives: Summarize recommendations from "Defining Objectives" section of Step 3.5.
    B. Key Assumptions and Alternative Scenario Considerations: From "Scenario Planning" section of Step 3.5.
    C. Recommended Priority Program Areas: Summarize findings from Step 4.
5. Appendices: List of data sources and interview list